

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CONSTRUCTION SAFETY AND HEALTH**  
**DIVERSITY/WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION WORK GROUP MEETING**  
December 2, 2008, Room N 3437 A/B, 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

**ATTENDEES:**

Tom Kavicky*	Chicago Regional Carpenters Union Work Group Co-Chair
Carmen Shafer	Shafer Safety Solutions, LLC
Kevin Beauregard*	NCDOL-OSHSPA
Thomas Shanahan*	National Roofing Contractors Association
Steve Hawkins*	Tennessee OSHA
Susan Bilhorn*	Jacobs Technology
Michael Thibodeaux*	NAHB/MPKA
Michael Buchet	USDOL-OSHA-DOC-OCS
Janice Scott-Blanton	NIOSH
Matt Gillen	NIOSH
Greg Hellmen	Inside OSHA
Tom Trauger	Winchester Homes
Danezza Quintero	USDOL-OSHA
David Zwolak	USDOL-OSHA-DOC
Chris Trahan	CPWR/BCTD

\* ACCSH Members

Welcome

Self-Introductions

Carmen Shafer taking notes

Review of workgroup charge:

ACCSH established workgroup on multilingual and diversity. At the meeting last May, ACCSH split the workgroup into two groups, multilingual and women in construction. This is the second meeting since the split; our focus is on safety and health issues that women face in construction industry

The work group's intent is not to attract women into the trades or address sexual harassment per se, (other than Workplace violence) – there are other agencies that handle these specific issues such as the Women's Bureau.

Workgroup should define goals and purpose of group for publication for future ACCSH publications.

Review September workgroup meeting:

Carmen Shafer gave report on fatalities and injuries for working women in construction injuries, fatalities and representation – Women account for 9.5% of workforce in 2006

Issues that were raised at the meeting include the perception women have that construction is dangerous work, lack of women mentors, harassment, workplace violence, ergonomics, IH issues, appropriate fitting PPE, fall protection, fall protection harness instructions for use and fitting specific to women.

September Recommendations – create resource page on the OSHA website to include links for associations and organizations aimed at supporting women in construction, create a PPE supplier directory, and update 1999 HASWIC study. These recommendations were made to full committee at September meeting full body.

What has happened since the September meeting:

- 1) Reviewed list of associations and resources for women in construction created by Carmen Shafer. OSHA will create a webpage for these and other resources.
- 2) Comment from one workgroup member that a resource for women's PPE exists within the NSC. Matt Gillen recommended ISEA as a resource for this directory.
- 3) The Work Group Co-Chair reached out to the "Sisters in the Trade-Unite Now!" representatives in Chicago. The group was asked what they felt were women's issues in the construction industry? The organization sent out an electronic survey to approximately 300-350 members and received 11% response. Survey questions addressed PPE, workplace culture, ergonomic, and training issues. Currently the organization is working with CWIT to do a second survey.

Results of the Survey indicated:

- 1) Majority of respondents said that the fit of PPE is "Poor". Even though manufacturers create small sizes, the contractors are not providing the PPE in different sizes at the jobsite. Some of the examples given by the women were of personal fall arrest harnesses that they felt they would fall out of if they were subjected to a fall. Another example was improper female sizing for safety vest users.
- 2) Culture is still male dominated. Many sites do not accept women as useful construction workers, sexual discrimination remains an issue, and sexual harassment continues to be prevalent. Isolation, physiological and mental stressors drives a fear of retaliation by assault. 52% of respondents said men "refused to work with them" at the construction sites.
- 4) Health and Safety along with skills training are lacking at the jobsites. There seems to be a negative attitude by the journeymen towards women apprentices, which results in bad habits being developed by the women which could compromise their safety.

### Suggestions/Recommendations from Survey –

The tradeswomen were very positive and surprised that ACCSH is interested and asking for their input. The respondents made some specific recommendations:

When OSHA inspects a site, the CSHO should ID female const workers, interview a representative sample to identify concerns and issues such as adequacy of PPE, sufficiency and sanitation of toilet facilities, workplace violence, reproductive hazards, etc. Respondents would like to see OSHA develop a checklist for CSHO's to use during inspections (HASWIC recommendation in 1999, not been implemented)

Matt Gillen recommended having the next workgroup meeting in conjunction with the scheduled ACCSH meeting in Rosemont, IL. The work group will invite local women in construction trade groups to attend the workgroup and provide input.

### ID deliverables –

Concerns from surveys of the respondents, 80% say they don't receive on the job skills or safety training. The broader implication may be that the men in the trades are also not receiving adequate training.

Discussed how OSHA can help with these issues: PPE Resources and raising awareness among employers of the hazards of ill-fitting PPE. Workgroup would like to see the PPE resource posted on the OSHA website.

Steve Hawkins recommended that OSHA CSHO's conduct more interviews representing a broader number of people to include all types of workers represented on a project, not just women. Singling out women or other minority groups can cause additional isolation within the workplace. CSHO's should sample all types of employees, different trades, gender, and ethnicity.

The work group recommends to the ACCSH Committee that OSHA (OTI) add to the current Compliance Officer Training course and conduct training to update existing CSHO's on the need to interview a representative sample of employees on site and to create an inspection guidance document outlining specific issues that should be addressed during the employee interviews.

Workgroup also recommends creating a Quick Card for Employers identifying major issues and why they are hazards. Specifically raise awareness on PPE fit issues for all employees.

Recommendation was made to the workgroup to create a task force to review and update the 1999 HASWIC paper. Task force should be comprised of representatives from NIOSH, OSHA, Women's Bureau and women in the construction industry. Compare current issues and concerns to the 1999 HAZWIC issues and create measurable goals and recommendations.

Recommendation was made to look at women's injury/illness data more closely to identify potential trends in particular trades or geographic regions.

The work group meeting was adjourned at 12:00 PM.